

Message Text

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ACTION OC-06

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MCT-01 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 /057 W
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R 061332Z MAR 78
FM AMCONSUL FRANKFURT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1126
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

UNCLAS SECTION 1 OF 2 FRANKFURT 1844

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: ASEC, ACOU
SUBJ: DEBRIEFING-DIPLOMATIC COURIER LYLE A. MORSE

REF: STATE 053595, FRANKFURT 1813

1. SUMMARY: DIPLOMATIC COURIER LYLE A. MORSE WAS DEBRIEFED BY RSO FRANKFURT ON MARCH 4, 1978 PERTINENT TO HIS KNOWLEDGE OF THE CIRCUMSTANCES AND ACTIVITIES SURROUNDING THE HIJACKING OF PK301 ENROUTE KARACHI FROM ISLAMABAD ON THURSDAY MARCH 2, 1978. MORSE WAS NOT DIRECTLY INVOLVED IN, NOR DID HE OBSERVE THE FOILED HIJACKING ATTEMPT. MORSE DID, HOWEVER, PROVIDE A NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION ON THE INCIDENT. APPROXIMATELY FIFTEEN MINUTES INTO THE FLIGHT, A LONE HIJACKER, SAID HUSSEIN, ATTEMPTED TO COMMANDEER THE AIRCRAFT. THE HIJACKER WAS OVERPOWERED, AND, WHILE BEING OVERPOWERED, A HAND GRENADE DETONATED IN HIS HAND, THUS INCAPACITATING HIM. THREE OTHER PERSONS WERE INJURED IN THE INCIDENT. THE PLANE WHICH WAS NOT DAMAGED RETURNED TO ISLAMABAD, WAS INSPECTED, AND LATER CONTINUED THE SCHEDULED FLIGHT TO KARACHI. OF PARTICULAR CONCERN TO OFFICIALS IN ISLAMABAD IS HOW THE HIJACKER MANAGED TO ELUDE AIRPORT SECURITY
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SCREENING. END SUMMARY.

2. DIPLOMATIC COURIER LYLE A. MORSE WAS DEBRIEFED BY THE RSO FRANKFURT ON MARCH 4, 1978 PERTINENT TO HIS KNOWLEDGE OF THE ATTEMPTED HIJACKING OF FLIGHT PK301 ENROUTE KARACHI FROM ISLAMABAD ON THURSDAY, MARCH 2, 1978.

3. MORSE ADVISED THAT APPROX 15-20 MINUTES INTO THE SCHEDULED FLIGHT PK301 WHICH LEFT ISLAMABAD FOR KARACHI AT 3:00 PM (LOCAL TIME), HE HEARD AN EXPLOSION IN THE REAR SECTION OF THE PLANE. SHORTLY THEREAFTER AN ENGLISHMAN, FACE BLACKENED BY POWDER BURNS, STUMBLED INTO THE FIRST-CLASS SECTION OF THE PLANE INQUIRING, "WHY DON'T THEY DO SOMETHING ABOUT THIS GUY?" IT WAS AT THIS TIME THAT MORSE LEARNED THERE HAD BEEN A HI-JACKING ATTEMPT ABOARD THE AIRCRAFT.

4. MORSE WHO WAS SITTING IN SEAT 5-B OF THE FIRST-CLASS SECTION WAS TWO COMPARTMENTS REMOVED FROM THE HIJACKING ATTEMPT, WHICH HE SAID OCCURRED IN THE ECONOMY SECTION-AMIDSHIPS, DIRECTLY OVER THE WINGS. THE PLANE WAS A PIA 747 JUMBO JET WITH APPROX 357 PASSENGERS ABOARD.

5. ACCORDINGLY THE ENGLISHMAN, WHO WAS NOW BEING TREATED BY A CREW MEMBER, WAS COMMENTING TO THE STEWARDESS, "HE'S DEMENTED", TO WHICH SHE REPLIED, "NO, HE'S A HIJACKER." THE ENGLISHMAN (SPEAKING LOUDLY) STATED THAT SHORTLY AFTER TAKEOFF THE HIJACKER HAD STOOD UP WITH A GRENADE IN HIS HAND AND HAD GIVEN A SHORT SPEECH IN URDU, (MORSE DID NOT KNOW WHAT THE HIJACKER HAD SAID, NOR HIS MOTIVATION FOR ATTEMPTING THE HIJACKING. UNCLASSIFIED

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HE BELIEVED IT WAS POLITICALLY MOTIVATED). SHORTLY AFTER THE SPEECH, A PASSENGER, ABDUL MALIK, OVERPOWERED THE HIJACKER FROM THE REAR. WHILE OVERPOWERING HIM, A FRAGMENTATION GRENADE DETONATED IN THE HIJACKERS HAND. THE EXPLOSION BLEW THE HIJACKERS HAND OFF AND INJURED 3 PERSONS NEARBY.

6. THE CAPTAIN OF THE AIRCRAFT ANNOUNCED THAT THE PLANE WAS RETURNING TO ISLAMABAD. HE GAVE NO REASON FOR THE RETURN. AT ISLAMABAD, MORSE WAS PERMITTED TO DEBOARD THE AIRCRAFT. HE WAS TAKEN UNDER THE AIRCRAFT TO THE REAR CARGO AREA WHERE HE OBSERVED HIS DIPLOMATIC CARGO BEING REMOVED FROM THE AIRCRAFT. HE THEN ACCOMPANIED THE CARGO TO THE TERMINAL AREA ON THE AIRPORT TARMAC. HE WAS NOT GIVEN ANY SECURITY PROTECTION. WHILE WAITING FOR THE SITUATION TO BE STRAIGHTENED OUT, MORSE ATTEMPTED TO CONTACT THE AMERICAN EMBASSY ISLAMABAD BY PASSING HANDWRITTEN NOTES TO GROUND STAFF, REQUESTING THE EMBASSY TO DISPATCH SOMEONE TO THE AIRPORT TO ASSIST HIM. MORSE SAID THAT WHILE IN KARACHI, HE LEARNED THAT THE C&R OFFICER IN ISLAMABAD HAD IN FACT GONE TO THE AIRPORT TO ASSIST HIM, BUT

COULD NOT GET THROUGH THE SECURITY FORCES WHICH HAD CORDONED OFF THE AIRPORT.

7. MORSE STATED HE WAS VERY CONCERNED THAT DIPLOMATIC PERSONNEL WERE NOT PERMITTED TO PASS THROUGH THE LOCAL SECURITY BARRICADE. HE POINTED OUT THAT THIS COULD HAVE HAD FAR-REACHING RAMIFICATIONS IF THE SITUATION HAD BEEN MORE SERIOUS; FOR EXAMPLE, IF HE HIMSELF HAD BEEN INJURED AND NEEDED ASSISTANCE.

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8. MORSE SAID THAT THE FLIGHT WAS RECALLED ABOUT FOUR HOURS LATER. THE FLIGHT WAS RESUMED TO KARACHI USING THE SAME PLANE AND CREW. AFTER DEPARTING KARACHI AS SCHEDULED,, MORSE CONTINUED HIS NORMALLY SCHEDULED COURIER TRIP.

9. IN CONCLUSION, MORSE EMPHATICALLY STATED THAT HE HAD NO FIRST HAND KNOWLEDGE OF THE ATTEMPTED HIJACKING, AND THAT THE ATTEMPT WAS FOILED COMPLETELY. FURTHERMORE, EXCEPT FOR THE HEAVY AIRPORT SECURITY AT ISLAMABAD WHEN THE FLIGHT RETURNED, HE OBSERVED NO UNUSUAL OR EXTRAORDINARY SECURITY MEASURES ON THE RESUMED FLIGHT TO KARACHI. ACCORDING TO MORSE, "I DIDN'T SEE ANYTHING, AND I DON'T REALLY KNOW ANYTHING. I JUST HAPPENED TO BE ABOARD A HIJACKED AIRCRAFT. WHAT COULD I DO? WHAT MORE CAN I SAY?"

10. MORSE PROVIDED THE FOLLOWING ACCOUNT WHICH APPEARED IN A KARACHI NEWSPAPER ON MARCH 3, 1978:
BEGIN TEXT: EX-ARMY NAIK FOILS HIJACK ATTEMPT.

ALL PASSENGERS, JUMBO JET SAFE. ISLAMABAD FEB 2:
AN ATTEMPT TO HIJACK A PIA JUMBO JET, CARRYING 357
PASSENGERS FROM ISLAMABAD WAS OVERPOWERED BY A RETIRED
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LANCE NAIK OF PAKISTAN ARMY, ABDUL MALIK,
THE HIJACKER, SAID HUSAIN, WHO BELONGS TO HAJIRA
VILLAGE IN AZAD KASHMIR, HAD HIS ONE ARM BLOWN OFF
WHEN THE HAND GRENADE HE WAS CARRYING EXPLODED. HIS
CONDITION WAS STATED TO BE CRITICAL.

ABDUL MALIK AND TWO OTHER PASSENGERS, MR. ISRAR
AHMED AND MR. ATIQUE SARDAR, SON OF KASHMIRI LEADER,
SARDAR ABDUL QAIYUM KHAN, RECEIVED MINOR INJURIES
CAUSED BY THE FLYING SPLINTERS OF THE GRENADE.

THE CHIEF MARTIAL LAW ADMINISTRATOR, GEN HOHAMMAD
ZIA-UL-HAQ, HAS ORDERED AN INQUIRY INTO THE HIJACKING
INCIDENT. THE INQUIRY WILL BE CONDUCTED BY THE FIA
UNDER THE CHARGE OF COLONEL FARID MALIK, WHO HAD ALSO
INVESTIGATED THE HIJACKING INCIDENT AT KARACHI.
THE HIJACKING INCIDENT OCCURRED TEN MINUTES AFTER
IT WAS AIRBORNE FROM ISLAMABAD INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT.
THE PLANE WAS BROUGHT BACK TO ISLAMABAD AND THE PASSENGERS
WERE TAKEN BACK TO THE DEPARTURE LOUNGE WHILE THE
HIJACKER AND THE TWO OTHER INJURED PERSONS WERE RUSHED
TO HOSPITAL. LATER MR. ATIQUE WAS DISCHARGED FROM
THE CMH.

THE JUMBO JET TOOK OFF FOR KARACHI AT 3 PM.
PIA CHIEF, AIR MARSHALL (RETIRED) NUR KHAN FLEW
HERE FROM KARACHI. THE PLANE WAS INSPECTED AND AFTER
A THROUGH CHECK, IT WAS DECLARED AIRWORTHY AND RESUMED
ITS JOURNEY WITH ITS FULL LOAD EXCEPT THOSE PASSENGERS
DETAINED FOR MEDICAL TREATMENT.

AN IMMEDIATE INQUIRY HAD BEEN ORDERED TO INVESTI-
GATE AS TO HOW THE HIJACKER MANAGED TO DODGE THE
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SECURITY STAFF. ALL THE CONCERNED SECURITY STAFF
HAS BEEN SUSPENDED. END TEXT OF NEWSPAPER ARTICLE.

11. END REPORT. NO CLOSING NARRATIVE REPORT WILL
FOLLOW. LEHMANN

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